

LITERARY EXAMINER.

The Death of the Flowers

BY W. C. RYAN.

The melancholy days are gone, the saddest of the year,
Of waiting winds, and naked woods, and meadows brown and bare,
Heaped in the hollow of the grove, the withered leaves lie dead;
They rustle to the eddying gust, and to the rabbit's tread.
The robin and the wren are flown, and from the shrubs the jay,
And from the wood-top calls the crow through all the gloomy day.

Where are the flowers, the fair young flowers, that lately sprung and stood
In brighter lights and softer airs, a beauteous neighborhood?
Alas! they all are in their graves, the gentle race of flowers,
Are lying in their lowly beds, with the fair and good of ours.
The rain is falling where they lie, but the cold November rain,
Calls not from out the gloomy earth, the lovely ones again.

The wild-flowers and the violet, they perished long ago,
And the briar-rose and orchid died amid the summer's glow:
But on the hill the golden rod, and the aster in the wood,
And the yellow sunflower by the brook in autumn beauty stood.
Till fell the frost from the clear cold heaven, as falls the plague on men;
And the brightness of their smile was gone, from upland, glade and glen.

And now when comes the calm mild days, as still such days will come,
To call the squirrel and the bee from out their wintry home;
When sound of dropping nuts is heard, though all the woods are dead,
And twinkle in the smoky light the waters of the rill,
The South wind searches for the flowers, whose fragrance late he bore,
And sighs to find them in the wood and by the stream no more.

And then I think of one, who in her youthful beauty died,
The fair meek blossom that grew up and faded by my side;
In the cold moist earth we laid her, when the forest cast the leaf,
And wept that one so lovely should have a life so brief;
Yet not unmet it was that one, like that young friend of ours,
So gentle and so beautiful, should perish with the flowers.

Passage of the First Cataract of the Nile.

We had been told that a strong wind was necessary to carry us through, as for the greater part of the way tracking is out of the question; and that travellers are frequently delayed for days and weeks, awaiting that indispensable auxiliary. But on the morning after our arrival at Es-souan, the auspicious wind set in, and everything augured a prosperous ascent. At ten o'clock yesterday morning, the Reis of the Cataract took possession of the Dahabieh with twenty of his men, (as many as we could well accommodate in addition to our own crew, the remaining eighty being sent on to the point where their services would be more immediately required), and we started with all our sails set, and quickly left the town of Es-souan behind us. And soon the wildness of the Cataract burst upon us in all its splendor; after the tame scenery which characterizes the banks of the Nile from Alexandria to Es-souan, it was quite refreshing to our eyes to rest upon something rugged, and differing in form from the eternal *dahria* fields and palm-trees. The commencement of the Cataract presents a complete Archipelago of granite rocks, some red, others black, and shining in the sun, as though highly polished, with various turrets rushing between them in all directions. These rocks are of the most extraordinary forms; now awful, now grotesque, they look as old as the earth itself—the skeletons of the antediluvian world! On the western shore the sands of the Great Desert, yellow as gold, and rippled by the action of the winds into wavelets, descend to the water's edge interspersed with great masses of black basalt, on the top of which strange and unknown forms, that one is led to attribute to some terrific volcanic eruption—to one of those early revolutions of the elements which changed the surface of the globe, the creation of that chaotic wilderness.

The breeze held strong, and well it was that it did so, for I cannot conceive how destruction could be avoided, if, for one moment, the impelling power should be overcome by the resistance of the torrent we were driven through. Here and there our course lay between rocks narrowing so closely together, and towering to such a height, that the wind was momentarily taken out of our sails, and I assure you, such moments were awful, for it was just a struggle whether the impetus with which we entered the narrow pass would carry us through it or not. And often there was a momentary pause, when that struggle rendered the boat stationary, while the sails fluttered like an expiring pulse; but again the breeze filled them, and the screams and shouts of the two crews would be converted into a hurrah of confidence and triumph. At each of those intervals, our good Reis Ali would leave his post at the prow of the vessel, in order to give me assurances of safety, and encourage me with a cheerful "Taiteh, Taiteh!" (very well, very good), by which kind process I became convinced, that not only had we already encountered some danger, but that more lay before us—a conviction that too well founded, as you will soon see. I had established for myself a test of the safety of our progress, which inspired me with more confidence than the friendly visits of Reis Ali; and this was our excellent cook, Hadjee Mustapha, whose little portable kitchen, in which he performs such great feats, is placed just opposite to the awning where I was standing. There he was, fixed to his post, and in the midst of the deafening noise and bustle around, imperturbably making preparations for dinner, which I began to think it doubtful that we should ever eat. But his unruffled sang froid satisfied me that he, who is a Nile bird, thought that there was no danger; and, in my fancied security, I lost sight of the fact that as a Moslem, and a Fatalist—above all as a cook—he was in religion and honor bound to show an immovable countenance—to leave the boat to its fate, and to stick to his *casserole*, and snap his fingers at the Cataracts.

Thus matters stood at noon; and, in reply to the anxious inquiries I addressed to Mohammed, he declared that we should soon arrive at that part of the Cataract called the *Bab*, or gate, where the eighty men were stationed to track the boat up the rapids, and that operation once achieved, half an hour would bring us to the island of Philæ, where all our troubles would be over. Scarcely had he made me that assurance, when the Swift entered one of those short but furious torrents, through which the practical channel flows. A scene of general confusion ensued; I heard the voice of every man of the two crews screaming in angry vociferation, and the hoarse shouts of the Reis, loud above the rest—I saw Mohammed draw his sabre, and rush towards the spot where the Reis of the Cataract's pilot

was stationed. I was immediately conscious that our onward course was not only arrested, but that we were retreating; for the surrounding rocks, which, but an instant before, were rapidly passing by, now appeared to be running away from us ahead. I looked up, and saw the sails trembling; I looked forward, and oh, *comble de desespoir*! beheld the cook drop a pudding-mould from his hand, and, seizing one of the poles which the crew employed to prevent the vessel wearing round, he heaved it to work with the rest. All is lost, thought I, since Hadjee Mustapha abandons his pudding! The next moment a hollow grating noise was heard, and my sinister apprehensions were confirmed; the boat had struck; luckily, it was by the stern, which held her fast, and prevented her swinging round with her broadside upon the rocks, where she must have been dashed to pieces.

The necessary precautions for such a casualty had been provided, and two of our men instantly threw themselves into the stream, and swam to an adjoining rock with ropes, which they made fast there, and thus established such a fulcrum to pull upon, as secured her from swinging round by the head. Meanwhile, the pilot who had been provided by the Reis of the Cataract, and whose negligent steering had brought us to this perilous pass, abandoned the helm, and jumping into the river, swam over to the eastern shore, and made his escape into the Desert. While we were lying in this predicament, every bump which the keel gave against the rocks sounding like deafening knocking at the door, all the surrounding rocks suddenly swarmed with naked Nubians, who sprang up, like Roderick Dhu's men, from what but an instant before, appeared to be a lifeless solitude.

On such occasions, I understand, those people always lie in wait and present themselves at the critical moment, either to obtain a *bachschish*, if assistance be possible, or to assume the character of wreckers if misfortune is inevitable. Many of them approached the Dahabieh, seated upon trunks of trees, and using their hands as paddles, the common mode of crossing the river adopted by this primitive race; but we rejected their services, having many hands on board as we required. At last, by dint of the greatest exertion, we were got off the rock that held us by the stern, but alas! it was to fall from Scylla to Charybdis—for, before we could once more get headway upon the boat, she struck again and this time she sprung a leak. There was nothing to be done but to run her upon the sands of an adjacent island, and to send to the nearest village for workmen to come and repair the mischief done; we then arranged ourselves for the remainder of the day and night. For the honor and credit of Hadjee Mustapha, I must tell you that our dinner betrayed no symptoms of the confusion and terror that had presided over its arrangements; and that his pudding, notwithstanding the ominous interruption that it encountered, was one of the very best he ever concocted.—*Mrs. Romer's Pilgrimage to Egypt, Nubia, and Palestine.*

Mrs. Gardiner.
Mrs. Gardiner is a creature of this kind. Her whole soul is centered in her flowers. She always had a rural taste when she lived in the city, but the smoke was fatal to the bloom of her roses and the scent of her southernwood. "I blow daisy," said she, "and my old man smells rusty." When at last, she gets into the country, her language, like her tastes, becomes more purely horticultural. When the spring is backward, she exclaims, "Lord knows when I shall be out of the earth; I almost think I'm rotted in the ground." She contrasts her show of red roses, with the white ones of her neighbors: "There's no maiden blushes about me; I'm the regular old cabbage, but I want the sun to make me bust." At another time she declares, triumphantly, "she is in full bloom, and invites a neighbor to come in and smell her." A spruce old bachelor complains to her that his peaches dropped off during the last frosty night; she has seen his trees, and corrects him. "Ah! it ain't the frost; you've got down to the gravel—I know you have—you look so scrubby and rusty." She exhorts a city acquaintance to mark the improvement effected by country air. "There's my monthly rose; look at my complexion now; you remember how smudgy I was before. We're very interesting, ain't we?"—*Hood's Comic Annual.*

The Petite Girl.

There was nothing; not a dash of the high-life-below-stairs vulgarity in her courtesies to the gardener, or the stable-boy.—The chimney-sweep was just as one of a gent and gracious reception. In short, little Ellen could not, though she had tried, have laid aside the bland and most urbane qualities of her manner. As a little was capable of divesting them of their real grace, or of having them mistaken for affected airs and mock civilities. She was polite merely because she could not help it.—True, her politeness was excessively ludicrous sometimes, and now and then rather embarrassing, when it implicated others by taking upon itself to speak for them. Thus I overheard her one morning prefacing a message I had given for the boot-cleaner, with my "compliments" (she was polite enough to call me her master, which I was not,) her master's compliments, and he thought the boots had not been quite so well polished of late! She never received even a command from any one without a "thank-ee," and she always took a letter from the postman with a nice little courtesy, and a smile of acknowledgment that implied a sense of obligation for his kindness in bringing it. "My master's much obliged," she would sometimes say, as she handed the twopenny. I'm not sure that she did not, one wet day, crown her politeness by offering to come and ask me to lend the postman my umbrella; she was certain he would get wet; and carrying other people's letters too!

One occasion I particularly recollect, and it affords a good illustration of Ellen's sensibility on the score of giving trouble.—A man had brought me some books, for which, on delivery, she impressively thanked him; when, as he was turning away, it occurred to him that he had a letter to deliver with the packet, and he began to search industriously in his bag. Observing the anxiety with which he pried into the corners of it, she said to him, in her excess of good-nature, "Oh, sir, pray don't trouble yourself."

"Trouble myself!" returned the honest man, elevating his eyebrows rather contemptuously, "why, if I have a letter to deliver as well as the books, I must deliver it, mustn't I?" and he proceeded with his search for a minute or two, when Ellen's good-natured concern for him broke out again, with, "I'm sorry to keep you waiting."

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winding course of the stream continually shut out the scene behind us, and revealed to us a calm and lovely one before. We glided from depth to depth, and breathed new seclusion at every turn. The sky kingfisher flew from the withered branch close at hand, to another at a distance, uttering a shrill cry of anger or alarm. Ducks—that had been floating on the surface of the preceding eddy—were startled at our approach, and skimmed along the glassy river, breaking its dark surface with a bright streak. The pickerel leaped from among the lily-pads. The turtle, sunning itself upon a rock, or at the root of a tree, slid suddenly into the water with a plunge. The painted Indian, who paddled his canoe along the Assabeh three hundred years ago, could hardly have seen a wilder gentleness displayed upon its banks, and reflected in its bosom, than we did.—*Hawthorne's Mosses from an Old Manse.*

Emerson.

"Were I to adopt a pet idea, as so many people do, and fondle it in my embraces to the exclusion of all others, it would be, that the great want which mankind labors under, at this present period, is—Sleep! The world should recline its vast head on the first convenient pillow, and take an age-long nap. It has gone distracted through a morbid activity, and while perennally wide awake, is nevertheless tormented by visions, that seem real to it now, but would assume their true aspect and character, were all things once set right by an interval of sound repose. This is the only method of getting rid of old delusions, and avoiding new ones; of regenerating our race, so that it might in due time awake, as an infant out of a dewy slumber; of restoring to the simple perception of what is right, and the single-hearted desire to achieve it, both of which have long been lost, in consequence of this weary activity of brain and torpor of passion of the heart, that now afflict the universe. Stimulants, the only mode of treatment hitherto attempted, cannot quell the disease; they do but heighten the delirium. Let not the above paragraph ever be quoted against the author, for, though tinged with its noxious taint, it is the result and expression of what he knew, while he was writing it, to be a distorted view of the state and prospects of mankind. There were circumstances around me, which made it difficult to view the world precisely as it exists; for, severe and sober as was the old Manse, it was necessary to go but a little way beyond its threshold, before meeting with stranger moral shapes of men than might have been encountered elsewhere, in a circuit of a thousand miles. These hobgoblins of flesh and blood were attracted thither by the wide-spread influence of a great original thinker, who had his earthly abode at the opposite extremity of our village. His mind acted upon other minds, of a certain constitution, with wonderful magnetism, and drew many men upon long pilgrimages, to speak with him face to face. Young visionaries, to whom just so much of insight had been imparted, as to make life all a labyrinth around them, came to seek the clue that should guide them out of their self-imposed bewilderment. Grey-headed theorists—whose systems, at first air, had finally imprisoned them in an iron frame-work—travelled painfully to his door, not to ask deliverance, but to invite the free spirit into their own threshold. People that had lighted on a new thought, or a thought that they fancied new, came to Emerson, as the finder of a glittering gem hastens to a lapidary, to ascertain its quality and value. Uncertain, troubled, earnest wanderers, through the midnight of the moral world, beheld his intellectual fire, as a beacon burning on a hill-top, and climbing the difficult ascent, looked forth into the surrounding obscurity, more hopefully than hitherto. The light revealed objects unseen before—mountains, gleaming lakes, glimpses of a creation among the chaos—but also, as was unavoidable, it attracted bats and owls, and the whole host of night-birds, which flapped their dark wings against the gaze's eyes, and sometimes were mistaken for fowls of angelic feather. Such delusion always hover, whenever a beacon fire of truth is kindled. For myself, too, had been epochs of my life when I, too, might have asked of this prophet the master-word that should solve me the riddle of the universe. But now, being happy, I felt as if there were no question to be put, and therefore admired Emerson as a poet of deep thought and austere tenderness, but sought nothing from him as a philosopher. It was good, nevertheless, to meet him in the wood-paths, or sometimes in our avenue, with that pure, intellectual gleam diffused about his presence, like the garment of a shining one; and he so quiet, so simple, so without pretension, encountering each man alive as if expecting to receive more than he could impart. And, in truth, the heart of many an ordinary man had, perchance, inscriptions which he could not read. But it was impossible to dwell in his vicinity, without inhaling, more or less, the mountain atmosphere of his lofty thought, which, in the brains of some people, wrought a singular gladness—new truth being as heady as new wine. Never was a poor little country village infested with such a variety of court, strangely dressed, oddly behaved mortals, most of whom took upon themselves to be important agents of the world's destiny, yet were simply botes of a very intense water. Such, I imagine, is the inevitable character of persons who crowd so closely about an original thinker, as to draw in his unuttered breath, and thus become imbued with a false originality. This triflingness of novelty is enough to make any man, of common sense, blasphemous at all ideas of less than a century's standing, and pray that the world may be petrified and rendered immortal, in precisely the worst moral and physical state that it ever yet arrived at, rather than be benefited by such schemes of such phantasms.—*Hawthorne's Mosses from an Old Manse.*

Levee's Memo.

Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height;
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang)
In height and cold, the splendor of the hills?
But come to move so near the Heavens, and cease
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down,
And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
Or red with spirited purple of the vats,
Or fox-like in the vine; nor comes to walk
With Death and Mourning on the Silver Horus,
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him drop upon the friths of ice,
That budding slant in farrow-cloves falls
To roll the torrent of dusky down
Below; let the torrent dash thee down
To find him in the valley; let the wild,
Leau-headed Eagle yell alone, and leave
The mountain loaves there to slope, and spill
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-mosk.
That like a broken porcupine waste in air:
So waste not thou; but come; for all the vales
Await thee; assure pillars of the north
Arise to thee; the children call, and I
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Below; let the torrent dash thee down
To find him in the valley; let the wild,
Leau-headed Eagle yell alone, and leave
The mountain loaves there to slope, and spill
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-mosk.
That like a broken porcupine waste in air:
So waste not thou; but come; for all the vales
Await thee; assure pillars of the north
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